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Interior Secretary Kempthorne Appoints New Member to Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Review Committee

WASHINGTON, DC – Secretary of the Interior Dirk Kempthorne has named Donna Augustine to the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Review Committee. The seven-member advisory committee is charged with monitoring, reviewing, and assisting in implementation of the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA).

Ms. Augustine (*Thunderbird Turtle Woman*), an enrolled member of the Aroostook Band of Micmac Indians of Maine, was selected from a list of traditional Native American religious leaders nominated by Indian tribes and other traditional religious leaders. Ms. Augustine was nominated by the Aroostook Band of Micmac Indians of Maine, Houlton Band of Maliseet Indians of Maine, Passamaquoddy Tribe of Maine, and Penobscot Tribe of Maine. She is recognized as a traditional religious leader by Indian tribes in the United States, as well as by Canadian First Nations, and has been actively involved in the repatriation of Native American human remains since 1977.

Ms. Augustine joins Dr. Garrick Bailey, Mr. Colin Kippen, Mr. Willie Jones, Mr. Dan L. Monroe, Dr. Vincas P. Steponaitis, and Dr. Rosita Worl on the seven-member review committee.

"The review committee serves a critical role in ensuring the goals of NAGPRA are carried out," Kempthorne said. "I am pleased with the willingness and commitment of Ms. Augustine to take on this important challenge. I look forward to the recommendations and advice of the full committee."

NAGPRA was congressionally enacted in 1990 to address the rights of lineal descendants, Indian tribes and Native Hawaiian organizations to Native American human remains, funerary objects, sacred objects, and objects of cultural patrimony with which they are affiliated. The law requires federal agencies and museums to consult with tribes and Native Hawaiian organizations, provide summaries and inventories of their collections, and upon receipt of a valid claim, repatriate cultural items to the appropriate parties. NAGPRA also provides additional protection for Native American cultural items discovered on federal or tribal lands.

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